Image of India in the Arab World: Shapes and Shades

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Introduction

The perception of an individual shapes his attitude towards other individuals. In the same way, the collective perception of a nation shapes the nature of its relations with other nations. Moreover, this perception of a nation towards 'other nation' will decide, in a way, as to what extent the interests of the 'other nation' are secured, or not, inside the territories of the perceiving nation or through its policies. A clear example of it is the case of United States of America in West Asia. At least until 1956, US was perceived positively; its policies in the region however undermined its positive image subsequently. The American president Woodrow Wilson was the first to champion and apply the principle of self-determination in the context of the modern international relations. Upholding the principle of self-determination in his Fourteen Points of January 1918, Wilson set out a blueprint for a just and lasting peace in Europe after the First

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World War. The Wilsonian approach influenced the idealist tradition in international relations, which has at times supported military intervention in support of self-determination.[1] Wilson's Declaration was seen favourably in the regions that suffered from European imperialism; and this is how US was seen as a supporter of the freedom of other nations, especially independence for the colonised people. With nationalism sweeping the Arab lands after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, Arabs came to see United States as a trusted friend and not as an imperial power. US criticised the Anglo-French and Israeli aggression on Suez Canal in 1956; and this further boosted the image of US as defender of freedom in the Arab world.

In 1958, US invaded Lebanon; and supported the Israeli aggression against Arab countries in 1967. Therefore, the way Arabs perceived US changed drastically from that of a saviour and liberator to a new colonial power. Now-a-days, American administration is seen in the region as hostile to the Arab people. Such a perception about US has evolved because Arabs consider US policies responsible for many tragedies at the region. They see American policies in the region as anti-Arab. People compare with sarcasm how the US managed to liberate Kuwait soon after its occupation by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in 1991, but not the Palestinian territories or Golan Heights of Syria which remain under Israeli occupation since decades. Arabs do recall vividly, how the US had forced Israel in 1957 to end its occupation and withdraw within weeks from Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. Significantly, the negative perception of US is not confined to the Arab world alone; it has been transferred to regions where West Asia has close cultural and religious connections. In consequence of its policies,

today US is looked at with suspicion and even hatred in the so-called Islamic world, including Muslim communities in the non-Muslim countries. No gainsaying, it is the anti-US feelings and hatred that is a contributing factor in generating and sustaining violent militants and their acts of terrorism. The tragedy of September 11 did not convince US to re-evaluate its polices and take steps to address the problem of terrorism by going to its root-causes. Instead US launched two aggressive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and supported another aggression against Lebanon in 2006. Needless to add, the level of hatred against US seems to have only increased with these military interventions and aggressions. There was a debate inside the US on "why they hate us?"; and the answer came from another debate on "why not to hate us?" Officially, the only reaction that came from US was to launch public relations campaign (PRC) in West Asia so as to improve its image and reduce the level of hatred against its policies and actions. It hardly needs to be stated that these efforts met with no success because US insisted on pursuing the same old policies that generate hatred for the Americans in the first place. Carl Weiser has written about the seriousness of the situation:

> The Bush administration spends $1 billion a year trying to polish the United States' image around the world, yet polls show anti-Americanism rising to record levels, especially in Muslim and Arab nations where the government is concentrating its efforts.... Public diplomacy spending has risen 9% in the two years since the September 11 attacks — and more than 50% in the Middle East and South Asia. But a comprehensive poll in foreign countries this spring showed that in Muslim nations from Morocco to

> Indonesia the United States has never been more loathed. In many places Osama bin Laden gets more favorable ratings than President Bush.[2]

Ironically, American politicians still think, or may like to think always, that there is some thing wrong with the public relations techniques which have been followed in these PRC. As the Republican Senator, Richard Lugar, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, put it once:

> Americans are brilliant at communication. Why in the world we are all thumbs in this particular area just strikes me as one of the anomalies of history. But it's an important one to solve pretty fast.[3]

This American way of neglecting the facts has been perfectly reflected in an Egyptian proverb that reads that 'much washing does not make the chalk white.'[4] Therefore, the side-effects of what is seen in the region as unjust American policies could not be treated with well-mounted public relations blitzkriegs.

India in the Arab World: Perception of the Masses and the Elites

The perceived new tilt in India's foreign policy towards US policy in West Asia obviously has its implications for India's relations and interests in West Asia. It has started changing, to the detriment of India and its relations with West Asia, the colours and shades of India's traditional image in the region. The present paper is a modest academic exercise to capture the shift in India's traditional image in the Arab world that took place after 1992; and attempts to present the nuances and shades by comparing between the image of India in the Arab world before 1992 and its image after 1992.

The present paper also attempts to highlight the implications of the new image for India's perceived interests in West Asia.

Today, there are two perceptions of India in the Arab world; one is how the masses in the region perceive India; and the secondly, the ways in which Arab elite perceives India.

For the masses, India evokes the images largely of what has been presented in and by the Bollywood movies. These include the India of Maharajas, Taj Mahal, Indian spices, silk and sari and Bollywood's super star, Amitabh Bachchan. The popular image of India in the Arab countries is quite identical. Bollywood movies are so popular in many Arab countries that these are usually screened by some national television channels on special occasions. Bollywood films are also easily available in the market for private use. It is important to bear in mind that since 1950s, Bollywood has remained the major source to enlighten Arab masses about India. No unsurprisingly, many first-time Arab visitors get extremely surprised when they see the difference between the India of Bollywood and India as it exists in reality. There are a few Indian leaders and statesmen, which are household names and evoke respect and admiration, especially among older generations and the elite circles. Foremost and incontrovertibly, these include the names of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.[5]

India's Image before 1992

The image of India in the Arab world before 1947 was that of a comrade in the common battle against colonialism. During this period, there were personal friendship between the Arab leadership and Indian leadership. Mahatma Gandhi was a close friend and ally of Saad Zaghlul Pasha, the Egyptian national leader of the 1919 revolution; and

Jawaharlal Nehru was a close personal friend of both Nahas Pasha (Egypt) and Kamil El Chadirchi (Iraq). Two powerful images are still recalled from the past and reiterated to highlight India and the Arab world standing together in the struggle against colonialism and aspiring for freedom and independence from foreign rule. Successive generations of Egyptians have shared, thanks to print media, the Egypt's response and reaction when Mahatma Gandhi passed through the Suez Canal on his way to London for participating in the Second Round Table Conference in 1931. A Wafdist delegation had visited Mahatma Gandhi aboard the S.S. Rajputana to express the good wishes of Egyptians for his success in his struggle against British colonialism.[6] The Indian leader also received telegrams welcoming him to Egypt from the leader of the Wafd Party, Mustafa El-Nahhas, and Safiyya Zaghlul—the widow of the late Egyptian nationalist leader Zaghlul Pasha. Gandhi was received warmly by Egyptian committee, formed for the purpose. According to the *Al Ahram* newspaper,

> The gifts the Egyptian reception committee presented to the Indian leader were most unusual for what was tantamount to a state visit. One was a vessel of honey inscribed with the Qur'anic verse: 'From their bellies comes variegated coloured syrup that contains a curative for people.' A second gift was a large, grey, camel-wool shawl 'to protect the leader from the cold during his stay in the British capital.' Finally, Gandhi was presented with 20 litres of goat milk and a large quantity of dates—Egyptian, not imported. Among these, a special package was prepared of the famous Egyptian red dates, known as Zaghlul, 'because of the significance of the name.'[7]

In his message to Egyptian people, Mahatma Gandhi encouraged Egyptians to carry on with their struggle for freedom. He pointed out the strong link between the destiny of both India and Egypt. The Mahatma addressed Egyptians through *Al Ahram* newspaper:

> You, like us, are an ancient people. I pray that you do not blindly imitate everything Western. If I have properly understood what has happened to your country you must persist in your endeavours to realise true freedom. And, if I may hazard a modest opinion, it is that Egypt will attain its liberty very quickly if India obtains its true freedom within the next 12 months. I firmly believe that if India gains its freedom through sincere perseverance and without violence this will have a great effect on the world and certainly for all the nations of the East.[8]

In mid-December, Gandhi embarked on his return trip to India. It was hoped that when he arrived in Port Said, he would make a brief trip to Cairo, towards which end Mustafa El-Nahas Pasha delegated a senior Wafd aide, Mahmoud Fahmi El-Nuqrashi. Later, both of them became prime minister for Egypt. Mahmoud Fahmi El-Nuqrashi went to meet the Indian leader and escort him to the Cairo. A detailed programme was drawn up for Mahatma Gandhi's visit but British authorities prevented the visit, as it apprehended that Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Cairo would further ignite nationalist fervour and strengthen Egyptian national struggle against British rule.[9]

Another example is the letter of Kamil El Chadirchi to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, dated 13 December 1938, wherein the Iraqi nationalist leader expressed the feelings of Arab nationalists

towards India and its nationalist leadership. El Chadirchi wrote to Nehru:

> Your country has been truly great from time immemorial, nature having given it inexhaustible resources. Though, from the dawn of civilization, India has not been as great as today when its intellectual seeds burst into bloom of such men as the country is in need of, more especially since a personality as unique as your own appeared on the horizon of the orient filling my imagination and that of my brethren.... We whole heartedly appreciate your struggle and wish we had the opportunity to share in it though in a small measure, for we both are in the same boat. True endeavour in the campaign against imperialism and exploitation must not be considered in separate units, but rather that neither geographical frontiers nor political obstacles can suppress it.[10]

In the post-colonial era, India continued to be seen in Arab world as anti-imperial power and a leader of the decolonised people. Furthermore, it was seen as a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement and a strong supporter of the rights of Afro-Asian peoples to get their independence, especially the Palestinian people. India opposed the imperial projects and acts such as the Baghdad Pact, Israeli-Anglo-French aggression on Egypt, and the American intervention in Lebanon in 1958. It also supported the liberation movement in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria during this period. India's image was so popular and its policies in the international arena were so highly appreciated that India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was described in Arab world as

the 'prophet of peace.'[11] At other times, he was described as the 'wise man of India' and the 'giant of the East.'[12]

India was seen in Arab world as a secular country and a promising democracy—a model that inspired many Arab nationalists, leaders and masses both.[13] Arabs saw India as a place of great religious tolerance and an example to be emulated by them. They saw India as a multi-ethnic democratic state committed to rights of minorities. The Sheikh of Al Azhar University, Dr. Abdel Halim Mahmoud had visited India to attend the Islamic Conference in Lucknow in the 1970s. He was impressed by the religious freedom that Indian Muslims enjoyed. While receiving the president of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, on his visit to the thousand year-old prestigious Al Azhar University in 1975, the Sheikh acknowledged that in India "all places of Islamic culture were well preserved and that the Muslims enjoyed complete freedom in the performance of the ritual of Islam and the propagation of its principles."[14] He also described India as a close friend of Arabs because it supported Arab causes, especially the Palestine.

The Image of India among the Arab Elite

As for Arab elites, India has multi-images, ones that have been obtained by reading both medieval and modern Arab literatures and poems that describe India as the land of civilization, sciences, religions and beauty.[15] Many Arab poets admired India, and wrote about it. For example, the Prince of Arab Poetry, Ahmed Shawqi wrote his 'The Virgin of India;' and Khalil Motran described India in his poems as 'Paradise' and the 'land of romance.'[16] Other poets and writers like Abdel Aziz Bioli, Khalil Girges, Mahmoud Bairm Al Tunsi, Amal Al Shami, all have praised different Indian

public figures such as Mahatma Ghandi and Jawaharlal Nehru for their struggle against British colonialism wherein both of them were described and eulogised as heroes and sincere in sacrificing their lives for the cause, like the prophets do. Tagore's writings were highly popular in the Arab world and the great poet was himself received by the 'Prince of Arab Poets' Ahmed Shawqi and his mates in Cairo in 1928.[17]

A very strong colour in this multi-faceted image that prevail among Arab elite circles is that of modern India as a growing economic power; an advanced nation due to its successful educational system, especially in information technology; and the ability of Indian elite to speak English. Arab elites do criticise India for allowing the conflicting coexistence of both caste and democratic systems at the same time. Some Arab intellectuals lament that India's role in Non-Aligned Movement is declining and has gradually been replaced by the policy of re-alignment. Many in the elite circles feel disappointed, as India was assumed to be one of the leading countries in the Third World. Some of them of course do argue that India's Non-alignment was motivated by its own interests, such as countering a hostile Pakistan or continuing with its own nuclear programme. So often, India is also praised as country for being highly productive, self-reliant and self-sufficient, with good infrastructure and high-quality educational system.[18]

One of the main features which Arab nationalists strongly appreciate about India is the success of Indian nationalism which has brought different cultural, linguistic and ethnic, caste and religious groups into one united Indian state. For many Arab leaders, this is an 'Indian miracle,' compared with the Arab failure to be united in one Arab state in spite of having a common language and culture and the majority

of Arab population being Muslim.[19] There are religious minorities in the Arab world, which may not constitute a minority in terms of language or national culture. Historically, minorities in the Arab world have been an integral part of the matrix of the Arab society. The dimension of religious minority politics began only as part of the imperial agenda of the Western powers in the twentieth century.[20] Be that as it may, Arab intellectuals admire and closely study the functioning of the pluralist, federal, parliamentary democracy of India; and they have been keen to draw ideas and inspirations from India's model of democracy.

The Image of India after 1992

In the years after 1992, the image of India in the Arab world has changed dramatically, including in its political dimensions. Especially the classical Indo-Arab friendship that was a feature of the politics of post-colonial era seems to have come to an end. This change is the result of complex factors, and their equally complex inter-play. Foremost of these factors is the rise of Hindutva as an active political force inside the Indian politics. This resulted in some serious developments in both internal political dynamics and external perception and policy of India. Internally, there were two communal acts which drew Arab attention in the 1990s: one against the history that resulted in the destruction of the Babri Masjid; and the second, the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 and its live coverage by the media. On the external front, India's policy in West Asia perceptibly began changing with the ascendance of Hindutva forces. India, a classical ally of Arabs, decided to have close relations with Israel, especially in the areas of security, defence and strategic

affairs. Furthermore, in the eyes of the Arab world, India seemed to be in growing harmony with US policies in the Arab region. Many of these policies were seen by the masses and the elites in the Arab world as anti-Arab. For instance, Arab media has noted that India, under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) rule, was even prepared to send forces to Iraq to support American aggression; and it was the Indian political opposition that blocked the project.

Gujarat Factor

The political rise of Hindu fundamentalism was seen in the Arab world as India's abandonment of Nehruvian and Gandhian principles of secularism and tolerance.[21] The anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat in 2002 has been cited often as a case that damaged the traditional image of India internationally. According to *Al Ahram* Weekly,

> One thing is clear. In the aftermath of the Gujarat events, India has lost its moral high ground. The international goodwill that the country gained from the 13 December terrorist attack on its parliament has been erased by Gujarat's communal savagery. The sectarian violence has also blunted India's diplomatic offensive against Pakistan. Recently Delhi has launched a PR campaign through its diplomatic missions and circulated an express advisory that puts its version of events across – detailing the circumstances leading to the violence and the steps being taken to rehabilitate riot victims and bringing the culprits to justice.[22]

New Delhi became sensitive about Arab media commentators drawing parallels between violence against

Indian Muslims in India and the Israeli crackdown on the Palestinian Intifada.[23] Some media reports also linked and cited Kashmir as an example of violence against Indian Muslims. Understandably this greatly upset India's ambassador in Cairo, who told the *Al Ahram* Weekly:

> Comparing Kashmir with Palestine is the biggest disservice to the Palestinian cause.... As pointed out by none other than President Hosni Mubarak himself; there is no parallel between Kashmir and Palestine. It is surprising that there are opinion-makers in Egypt who wish to continue supporting terrorist elements by making such statements, even when Egypt itself, like India, has suffered from terrorism for so long.... Unlike Palestinians, whose land is occupied by Israel, and many of them have been expelled from their homes, most Kashmiris are living in the land of their forefathers. They have full opportunities to use their language, to promote their culture, to practice their religion and to run their own administrative and economic affairs.[24]

The Saudi daily *Arab News* observed the changes in the image of Gujarat which was remembered as the land of Mahatma Gandhi but in 2002 had turned into a place for communal violence. The newspaper described the then ongoing situation as the "reign of terror." According to the *Arab News*,

> Gujarat was once famous as the seat of the world's best-known peace activist and the biggest proponent of Hindu-Muslim amity, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Sadly, today the name brings to mind images of charred bodies, burned mosques and wailing people. The communal flare-up which began

on Wednesday has already taken over 800 lives; left thousands injured and caused property damage amounting to millions of dollars.[25]

This harm to India's image abroad has been acknowledged even inside India. According to *Asia Times*, "Gujarat's pogrom politics are destroying India's carefully cultivated image of a secular democracy in the community of nations."[26] After three years, the tragedy of Gujarat was still alive in the memory of Arab elite. Mohamed Ouda who is known as the friend of India, while welcoming the coming back of Congress party to power in the 2004 general elections, wrote an article entitled "India Correct History and Get Her Shining Face Back." He described what happened in Gujarat as massacre and an attempt on the part of the ruling Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) to destroy the heritage of Mahatma Gandhi.[27]

Realignment of India's Foreign Policy

Another factor is the realignment of Indian foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Arab media argued that India faced a strategic dilemma after the disintegration of Soviet Union, which was the main ally for India and an important tool to contain Chinese influence. With the end of Cold War, India was searching for an alternative strategic ally. US was left as the only super power in the new global disorder. Meanwhile, Americans were trying hard to win India in their own camp. This will serve their purpose in containing both China and Russia in the Asian mainland. This will also make it difficult for India to join both Russia and China in making a new equation of power that may change and/or end the American unipolarity in global politics.

However, India's perceived tilt towards US proved to be

practically harmful for Arab interests. Today, there are many in the Arab world who have started to feel that the growth of India relations with both US and Israel might be at the expense of the Arab causes. Unfortunately, the West is acting as if it is in a de-facto war against the Arab and Islamic world. This has made it easy for many Arabs to doubt every Western move. Moreover, they have begun to doubt every country that gets closer to US, or to whom US gets closer. This will explain why Putin's Russia is getting its popularity and influence in the region back and why India is losing its traditional image as a friend. Al Zawahri of Al Qaeda spoke soon after the visit of Ariel Sharon to New Delhi about "the American–Jewish-Indian alliance against Muslims." Such a view should have been dismissed; but Sir John Thomson, a former British High Commissioner to India, also spoke, somewhat enigmatically, in the language similar to that of Zawahri. Sir John Thomson wrote:

> The geographical definition of South Asia has expanded. If we had any doubt before, September 11 [2001] has made it clear that we have to take into account Afghanistan and its neighbours: Iran to the west; all the former Soviet republics to the north; and China to the east. The geographical context for South Asia may be even wider. We in the West say—sincerely, I believe—that we are not against Islam, but many Muslims do not believe it. So, to a greater or lesser extent, our relations with Arab countries can be connected with our South Asian policies. And this potential extension of our area of concern is being reinforced, unfortunately, by the spiralling disaster in Israel-Palestine.[28]

Kashmir and Palestine: the Diplomatic Equation

Both the destruction of Babri Masjid and the Gujarat riots in some complex and inexplicable way activated the Kashmir factor in the Arab mind and media. The Kashmir issue was dormant for long in affecting Indo-Arab relations and shaping India's image. Officially, many Arab countries favoured the resolution of the problem through peaceful bilateral negotiations, and according to Shimla agreement. It is to be noted that the issue was confined only to the conferences and diplomatic forums in the Arab world. But now, the collective Arab mind started to refresh its memory on Kashmir. For decades, Kashmir and the conflict with Pakistan was the main negative factor which disturbed Indo-Arab friendship. A clear example of that was the diplomatic crisis that took place between India and Egypt as a result of some controversial statements on Kashmir by Egyptian ambassador in Pakistan during the years, 1950-51. The crisis ended when Egypt asserted its complete neutrality in the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.[29] Yet, Kashmir continued to be the biggest challenge for Indian diplomacy in West Asia. According to Jagdish Sharma,

> Despite repeated efforts by hostile states to break the bonds of friendship, India, with the help of friendly nations of West Asia and North Africa like Nasser's Egypt and Arafat's Palestine, successfully countered such moves, each coming to the help of the other in times of crisis. The success of Indian diplomacy during Suez crisis was offset by the problems of the Kashmir issue. Kashmir was an important facet of Indian national interests and the protection of

> national goals is a determining factor of any country's foreign policy.[30]

Kashmir is still a problem for Arabs also because it prevents them from expanding their relations freely with the two conflicting neighbours. Pakistan insisted on raising the issue of Kashmir in the OIC meetings which discomforts not only Indians but Arabs too. As an Arab diplomat put it, "This has made it very difficult for us. We are being asked to stand up and be counted."[31] To avoid such a predicament, Arabs always have had an interest in Kashmiri problem being resolved peacefully through negotiations between the two countries. This also explains why many Arab leaders used to offer mediation between India and Pakistan to solve the problem. The negative impact of Kashmir problem on Indo-Arab relation was largely eliminated by India's support for Palestinian rights in their land and state. Additionally, India secured also the friendship of Arabs. Palestine was the heart of Arab politics and diplomacy. According to Abu-Jaber,

> Palestine has been one of, if not the focal point of Arab international diplomacy since and even before 1947.... India voted against the United Nations Resolution for the partition of Palestine when it was voted upon on November 29, 1947. India has also voted consistently with the Arabs in the United Nations when the Palestine question and its various aspects were discussed in the various councils of the United Nations.[32]

India's support for the Palestinian cause was in complete harmony with India's spirit in the struggle against colonialism. It was a just cause which deserves to be morally supported. Moreover, the Indian support served the national

interests by securing the neutrality of Arab countries in the continuing conflict between India and Pakistan because Arabs felt indebted to India for its pro-Arab policy. Moreover, it secured the goodwill of Arabs towards India. The reaction of Arabs to India's decision to accord full diplomatic status to the PLO was a clear evidence of the centrality of Palestine factor (Iraq could be considered another one) in Indo-Arab relations. According to the report of Ministry of External Affairs of India for the year 1980-81,

> A perceptible new warmth characterized India's relations with the Arab world. The Governments in West Asia and North Africa responded enthusiastically to the initiative taken by the new Government to foster closer political and economic relations with countries in this region. The decision of the Government of India to accord full diplomatic status to the PLO was warmly welcomed. This was a clear demonstration of India's consistent, steadfast and sincere support to the Palestine people. The Chairman of [the] Palestine Liberation Organisation, Mr. Yasser Arafat, visited Delhi and had extensive discussions with the Prime Minister and the Minister of External Affairs. The visit of Arafat to India produced very favourable reactions among the Arab countries and several Arab Heads of State personally expressed their appreciation for India's gesture.[33]

India's support for Palestinian cause was the core of its strategy to counter Pakistan politically and diplomatically in West Asia. India' Palestinian policy aimed to win the hearts and minds of Arabs and to also prevent them from getting closer to Pakistan.[34] Therefore, many Arab states were always trying to balance their relations with both India and

Pakistan. This strategy was an effective response to Pakistan's attempt to isolate India in West Asia. Pakistani attempts were recognised by Nehru, who succinctly summed the prevailing thought processes in the Arab world:

> There is undoubtedly a certain pan-Islamic tendency drawing the Islamic countries of the Middle East towards each other. At the same time, there is a completely different tendency which may be said to be pro-Asian as against Europe and America.... This latter tendency bases itself more on nationalism just as the former bases itself on religion. The nationalistic tendency is more confined to the intellectuals who can see a little farther. They try to play down to certain extent Islamic sentiment as such because they realise that while it is the cementing factor for certain Islamic countries, it comes in the way of a larger cooperation with other Asian countries.[35]

This guided and motivated India to support nationalistic tendencies and compete with Pakistan in supporting the Arab causes, especially Palestinian cause. It was clear that India used to observe closely the implications of Pakistan's diplomacy in West Asia. This was evident from the telegram that Nehru sent on 30 March 1948 to his sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit. He wrote:

> I have been considering whether we should try for one of the seats in the Security Council which will fall vacant at the end of this year. 1 have been officially informed that Iran is proposing to stand for election and I would not be at all surprised if Pakistan were also to enter the field, supported by the Arab states who feel grateful to her for Zafrullah's

> advocacy of the Arab cause during the debates on Palestine.... Our position in Asia makes our claim a very strong one and there seems no reason why a seat should go year after year to a Muslim country.[36]

The success of Indian diplomacy in securing the goodwill of Arab public and reducing to a great extent the impact of Pakistani propaganda over Kashmir on the Arab mind was so clear and far-reaching that the Pakistani daily newspaper, *Dawn,* severally criticised the good relations between India and Egypt over the symbol of Arab nationalism, namely the Suez crisis of 1956. In a diatribe against Nasser, *Dawn* wrote:

Nasser's hatred of Pakistan and love of Bharat and its Nehru is an attitude of mind not warranted by facts but conditioned by intense bias and blind prejudice the source of which may well be examined by psychiatrists.[37]

Risking the Assets and Winning the Liabilities

Today, India is risking 'the love of Bharat' to be lost in the Arab world as a result of the growing Indo-Israeli relations that contradicts with what MEA called in 1981 "India's consistent, steadfast and sincere support to the Palestine people." The 'love of Bharat' is explained in the flow of Arab energy to India, seven million Indians working in the Arab Gulf, and the Arab market which offers plenty of projects for Indian investment. Strategically, the Arab world is the first defence line for India from Westward. The failure or success of the West in its quest for dominating completely over West Asia will affect drastically the economic and political future of India. Many Arabs would not imagine India's support to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa while, at the same time, maintaining close relations with the apartheid regime.

Many Arab commentators argue that India established diplomatic relations with Israel in the context of the peace process of the 1990s; and with the hope that it will enable India to exercise some positive influence on Israel to end its occupation of the Arab lands. When asked about the visit of Sharon to India, Arafat had replied that the opening of Indo-Israeli relations was the result of the beginning of peace process; and he expected India to put pressure on Sharon for joining peace talks again. Arafat also warned that Sharon's visit will further escalate tension between India and Pakistan.[38] Arafat, who was very sensitive and sincere in his friendship for India, perhaps did not want to say that the justification (peace) for the close relations between India and Israel was no more there. Mousa Ragheb, a Palestinian writer, considered the visit of Sharon as evidence that Arabs lost India as a classical ally and friend in the 1990s. Mousa Ragheb put the blame on the Arab doors for such results. In his view, Arab regimes did not care to keep their friendship with India and other friends carefully.[39]

Asharq Alarabi, an Arabic newspaper based in UK, saw Sharon's visit in the context of clash of cultures:

> India's shift from the camp that support Arab right to the camp that support the Zionist aggression.... is a part of international equation, which is sponsored by USA and Israel in the context of clash of civilizations. The Arab regime did not care enough for such equation. This recent Zionist move is a step in the broader American-Zionist strategy to contain Islam and the Arab world.[40]

A Kuwaiti writer apprehended that Arabs are the only loser in the context of the growing Indo-Israeli relations:

> The support of India for Arab cause will be changed gradually. India will tend to adopt the Israeli position inside the international forums. At the best scenarios, India will be neutral which will be a loss for Arabs anyhow. The linkage of Indo-Israeli relations will keep Arabs as the biggest loser militarily and politically in this new equation.[41]

Such a view is accepted also by Mohamed No'man Galal, an Arab strategic and diplomatic expert:

> The decade of 1990s saw an important shift in India's position vis-à-vis Arab causes, especially the question of Palestine and the question of making the Middle East a nuclear free zone. No doubt that the great cooperation between India and Israel, since establishing diplomatic relations between them in 1992, was the main motive behind this shift, which India denies it's happening. This shift is an established fact that could be noted by anyone who observes developments in the Middle East and India's reactions for it. We can give two examples of this shift; one example is India's support for a resolution that will cancel a resolution that considered Zionism as a feature of racism. This was the resolution which has been supported by India in 1975 and India has supported cancelling it in 1992, to be in harmony with the stream of international politics and its shifting sands. The second example is India's vote in 2000, object to the sixth paragraph of the resolution to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapons-free zone, and free of weapons of mass destruction. The sixth paragraph calls upon Israel to accede to the NPT as the only country in the region

> is not acceding to the Convention, and that this in under the concept of the universality of the treaty. Before 2000, India used to vote by abstaining on that paragraph for special considerations to its nuclear arsenal. Apart from the fading voice of Indian objection to the repressive policies of Israel in the Palestinian territories, these policies have culminated in the siege of Yasser Arafat in Ramallah and the destruction of villages and cities and massacres in Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem and other Palestinian cities.[42]

Ibrahim Arafat, an Egyptian political scientist, wrote an article titled "What to Do with India?" wherein he argued that Arabs need to get rid of three illusions in their understanding of Indo-Arab relations—the illusions of history; ideology; and unlimited oppression—before

> They can think confidently what to do with India; the whole issue could be summarized in utilizing the balance of Arab interests successfully and exploiting what Arabs have in their hands carefully. India needs Arab countries in many ways. It needs Arab energy for its industrial development; Arab market for its skilled workers and goods. India also needs not to lose Arab countries in the international forums, especially when it comes to its relations with Pakistan. India also needs not to see the coldness of its relations with Arab world angering its Muslim citizens. Moreover, India's relations with Israel will not anger only the Arab world but also other people in South Asia. India could not neglect the latter as it is trying to assert its leadership in the region. All these cards seem like showing stick which might not

> work with a big country like India unless some carrots will be offered such as more Arab investments in India, channelling Indian exports to European and African markets via Arab countries, encouraging India to rethink joining the OIC after Russia requested also to join the OIC and signing an Arab treaty with India for countering terrorism. The problem with Arabs is not the lack of enough sticks in their hands but in knowing what India's stomach is hungry for.[43]

The growing Indo-Israeli strategic and defence ties continue to raise a controversial debate among Arab military and strategic circles on the implications of these relations for Arab national security. Some argue that Arabs could not deny New Delhi rights to have such relations while some Arab countries themselves have diplomatic relations with Israel. However, it is still widely believed that India can not compare itself to these countries as their cases are different. The voices of national security circles in the Arab world are the most influential when it comes to Indo-Israeli relations. The views of these circles are well represented in the statement of General Talat Mesalm:

> Any cooperation between Israel and another country is considered a threat for Arab and Islamic world as this will strengthen Israel to exercise more aggression against Arab and Islamic rights; and will end the isolation of Israel in the region where many Arab countries realize the dangers of Israel. Therefore, the development of relations between India and Israel represent a danger against Arab and Islamic countries. This danger could be seen in the security and strategic relations that allow Israel to use Indian

> Ocean, in cooperation with Indian Navy. This is an immediate threat for the South East of Arab world, especially Arab countries in Gulf region, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan. This is a threat for the self-existence of these countries. The Israeli sales of arms to India increase the capabilities of Israel in developing its military industries, which will increase its threat for Arab and Islamic world. This will help Israel in facing the economic dangers, resulting of Palestinian Intifada and therefore the continuation of Israel in threatening Palestinian people and neighbouring Arab countries.[44]

Other scholars saw much strategic implications in Indo-Israeli relations. According to Medhat Ayub,

> The growth of the Indian-Israeli relations and India being convinced that Israel is the gateway to the market and USA, and that the Arab countries would not be serious in its reactions to affect Indian interests in the region, especially access to oil and trade with the Arab world and Indian expatriates in the Arab countries, this growth in Indo-Israeli relations, particularly, in both its military and security aspects would strengthen Israel, and will disrupt the military and strategic balance in favour of Israel. Also, this cooperation between the two countries will lead to the revitalization of the Indian-Pakistani conflict, which will neutralize the Pakistani factor in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and will also neutralize the Iranian power that will be preoccupied with the threat coming from India.[45]

Despite the collapse of the peace process between Arabs and

Israel, Indo-Israeli relations intensified, in particular under the BJP-led NDA rule as the Indian support for Palestinian became a verbal exercise.[46]

Another aspect of Indo-Israeli relations is the 'joint counter terrorism' cooperation between Israel and India. This was interpreted by Arabs as Indian acceptance of Israel's definition of terrorism which considers the Palestinian resistance as terrorism. The continuation of Kashmir dispute is creating negative reaction towards India in the Arab world for reasons of religious affinity and sentiments; and for what has been seen in the Arab world as heavy-handed military handling of the problem, and also media reports suggesting Israeli role in suppressing Kashmiri people or Israeli advice to change the demography of Kashmir.[47] Some Islamic websites consider Kashmir as one of the tragedies, which the Islamic Ummah (nation) is facing.[48] There were some incidents when few religious-oriented young Arabs were inspired by such readings to join militant groups in Kashmir. Kashmir is still remembered among Arabs as a place where Muslims are suffering at the hands of Indian army.[49] The informed understanding of the problem is just limited to the academics who study about India, and intellectuals who are aware of the historical context of the problem and the role of the British in dividing India.

Changing Image: Bright and Dark Colours

There is a huge gap between the colours of traditional image and the colours of the new image of India in the Arab world. Some pictures will make this gap clear. The old image has positive bright colours. For example, one picture shows Palestinians in Gaza demonstrating to welcome the arrival of Indian peace forces there during the 1956 Suez crisis. They

carried the photos of Nasser and Nehru and shouted 'Long Live Nasser, Long Live Nehru.'[50] Other picture shows Krishna Menon surrounded with Egyptian masses who discovered him in the middle of Cairo taking a walk with India's ambassador to Egypt. Egyptians gathered to celebrate seeing Menon and to welcome him and show their gratitude for India's support. Menon was hardly able to get free and leave these friendly masses. This happened in 1957 when Menon was the diplomatic star of Suez crisis.

The new image has some dark colours. One example of that happened after the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, when a Kuwaiti cooperative society in the Gulf tried to dismiss its Hindu employees; and the authorities had to stop it from doing so. Another example of dark colour was when a group of people gathered and threw some stones on a Hindu temple in UAE; and the police had to intervene to control the situation.[51] There was even some kind of a silent agreement among many businessmen in the Gulf to stop recruiting non-Muslims as a way of protesting against the destruction of Babri Masjid.[52] Furthermore, another dark colour was the picture of Sharon shaking hands with the former prime minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in September 2003. The photograph splashed in the Arab media shocked the Arab masses who always remembered seeing Nasser with Nehru and Arafat with Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. They were shocked more as they remembered that even many European countries had refused to receive Sharon as they felt him being responsible for many massacres against Palestinians.

Arabs fail to understand why India, as a leader of NAM and developing countries, did not take any initiative to stop the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. Arabs compare between

India's reaction vis-à-vis Suez crisis in 1956 and its response to the aggressions on Iraq (2003) and Lebanon (2006). The gap seems so wide. In 1956, India supported Egypt after its realisation of the severity of the situation and its implications for India's own national security. India considered that the Israeli-Anglo-French invasion was an attempt of the Western imperialism to return to Asia and destroy the bloc of Non-Aligned countries. This was Nehru's understanding of the Suez crisis, and he wrote to Nasser:

> If colonialism succeeds in coming back to Egypt, it will reverse the entire course of history and return to every other country from which it had been forced to go. Therefore...colonialism should not be allowed to succeed in Egypt. Otherwise it will signal a new and long fight for the whole of Asia and Africa.[53]

The Indian efforts to support Egypt varied from the beginning of the crisis to its end. Initially, India played the role of the mediator in the conflict and explained the dimensions of the Egyptian situation, showing the inflexibility of the West. India tried to put pressure on the aggressors and their allies through a withdrawal threat from the Commonwealth, and formed an international world public opinion front that included other Afro-Asian countries, the socialist bloc and the US. Indian diplomacy pursued the aggressors inside and outside lounges of the UN. India capped its role with its contribution to the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). New Delhi accepted to participate in UNEF according to the Egyptian conditions. UNEF supervised the withdrawal of the attacking troops and was a helpful factor in maintaining peace till 1967. The moral influence of India and its size in the strategic balance of the divided world lent its policy the strength of a heavy weight;

and this weight helped Egypt in winning its battle against the West. Arab masses and elites alike remember India's role as a demonstration of India's geo-strategic capability and place in the maintenance of peace and security in the area stretching from South Asia to North Africa. Arab masses and elites compare it with India's inactive position in preventing or ending the occupation of both Iraq and Lebanon. The statement of Ministry of External Affairs on the commencement of military action in Iraq came on 20 March 2003 only to state that "The military action begun today...lacks justification."[54] In the statement, there is no any identification to this action if it is illegal or aggression. Moreover, BJP had wanted to send forces to Iraq to join the US-led coalition; it was the Indian opposition that stopped it. Foreign forces in Iraq, regardless of their nationalities, are seen as occupying powers by not only Iraqis but also by the Arab public. The Indian reaction to Israeli aggression against Lebanon came quite late, and did not call it "aggression" or questioned its legality and morality. The Israeli aggression started in 12 July 2006, and India commented only on 30 July 2006 when the Ministry of External Affairs stated that,

> India strongly condemns the continued irresponsible and indiscriminate bombing of Lebanon by the Israeli military, ignoring calls for restraint. Particularly outrageous is the bombing this morning of a building in Qana in south Lebanon, which has resulted in the deaths of dozens of innocent civilians, mostly women, children and old people who had taken shelter there. India expresses its deep condolences to the Government and people of Lebanon over this tragic incident.[55]

One wonders if Indian diplomacy will be enough to

neutralize the side-effects (the decline of India's image as a close friend of Arabs) of the new trends in India's foreign policy regarding WANA. Arabs remember the geo-strategic importance of India, as demonstrated during the Suez crisis, for WANA and wonder what the 'emerging power' might gain or lose with the realignment of its foreign policy towards the region.

Many Arabs believe that India needs to rethink its close relations with Israel in defence and strategic arenas, and that it needs o avoid being identified as approving or supporting the US polices in the region in order to preserve its traditional image and larger interests in the Arab world. A stable and independent India has a critical role to play in the elimination of aggressions and presence of foreign military forces in the region. Continuing of American policies in the region will only affect India's own stability and hurt its energy security in the long term. Sharon's visit to India in September 2003 had attracted the attention of fundamentalist outfits like Al Qaeda. According to Al Jazeera TV that broadcast the video-tape, Al Zawahri, the second man in command of Al Qaeda, condemned the agreements that India signed with Israel during Sharon's visit and described them as "a drop of the flood of the American–Jewish-Indian alliance against Muslims." Al Zawahri called upon "Muslims to provide their support for Mujahidins in both Afghanistan and Kashmir."[56]

Concluding Remarks

If India's image in the Arab region continues to deteriorate, India may lose completely the goodwill of Arab masses. The realignment of India's foreign policy is also seen as inimical to Arab interests, and as being closer to Israeli and US strategic goals.

The destruction of Babri Masjid, the growing Indo-Israeli relations and the communal riots in Gujarat, all accumulated negative reactions among Arab masses and contributed to changing the traditional image of India. The new image of India in the Arab world has two main trends. One of these trends is the feeling among Arabs that Indian secularism is endangered by the rise of Hindutava, and that this might affect negatively the position of Muslims in India. The other trend among Arabs assumes that India's traditional friendship for Arabs is doubted today as a result of growing Indo-Israeli relations. The bottom line is that the image of India in the Arab world today has more negative colours and shades. India need not repeat the mistakes of US, which until 1956 was also seen as a friend of Arabs and supporter self-determination of the Palestinians. Arab commentators also argue that India does not have to bear the cost of the mistakes of US policies and Israeli intransigence towards the Arabs. It was its friendship with the Arab world that excluded India from the oil embargo of 1973; and, earlier, had made Egypt prevent the passing of Portuguese warships through the Suez Canal during liberation of Portuguese colonial enclaves of Goa, Daman and Diu by Indian forces. It is the traditional Arab feelings of affinity and neighbourliness towards India which, more than any other factor, explain the presence of some seven million Indian expatriates in the Gulf. It is the absence of such warmth and goodwill, which has been caused by the imposition of five million foreign Jewish people on Arab lands, that explain many wars and ongoing conflicts in the Arab world.

Endnotes

1. Self-determination ,16 March 2007, Wikipedia Encyclopedia, >http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-determination<

2. Carl Weiser, "$1 Billion International Image Campaign isn't Enough to Buy U.S. Love," *USA Today*, 14 September 2004. >http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2003-09-14-prawar-gns_x.htm <

3. Ibid.

4. > http://amthal.m3loma.com/gamal.htm<

5. The facts and data for this paper have been collected mainly through interviews which were conducted with nationals from different Arab countries in the months between October 2006 and February 2007. These nationals from Arab countries include Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine, Syria, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Their names are not disclosed on their own request.

   Images of India are very varied and work in some very interesting ways. For instance, Sudanese people appreciate the quality of Indian education; and Tunisians will admire the fact that Indian elite can speak English fluently, which is not easy for many in the Tunisian elite who speak mainly French.

   The present researcher is of the considered view that that the subject of this paper should be carried out as a larger research project joint carried out by scholars from India and different Arab countries. The present paper is a modest attempt; a full-fledged study involves extensive field study and access to literature written in Arabic in different Arab countries.

6. G.S. Bhargava, *India-U.A.R. Relations: An Assessment* , (New Delhi: People's Publishing House), Pp. 4-6

7. *Al Ahram Weekly* (Cairo), 19-25 December 2002

8. Ibid

9. Ibid

10. Najma Heptullah , *Indo-West Asian Relations: The Nehru Era*, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1991), p.102; and Ajay N. Jha, "Indo-Iraqi Relations, 1947-86: Need for Fresh Initiatives," in Verinder Grover, ed., *West Asia and India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications ,1992), p.441

11. He was called the 'prophet of peace' during his visit to Saudi Arabia in 1956, *Aasharq Alawsat* (London), 31 January 2006

12. Anwar El Sadat, who was president of Egypt (1970-1981), called Nehru in his articles that appeared in *Al Goumhouryia* newspaper (Cairo) as 'the wise man of India' and the 'giant of East' during the crisis of 1956. See, Anwar El Sadat, "A Tycoon and A Dwarf," *Al Goumhouryia* (Cairo), 10 August 1956

13. Mohamed El Said , an expert of strategic affairs, called upon Egypt to copy the model of India's Election Commission. Mohamed El Sayed El Said , *For Indian Election Committee, Arab and International Analyses,* (Cairo: Center for Strategic and Political Studies, Al Ahram) <http://www.ahram.org.eg/acpss/ahram/2001/1/1/ANAL614.HTM>; Nasser Yahia wrote an article titled "A Lesson from the Land of Sind : This is How Indians Fight Corruption !" on the website of "Islah," the Islamic movement of Yemen , where he appreciated Indian democracy and called it the biggest democracy in the world ,11 March 2007. <http://www.alsahwayemen.net/view_news.asp?sub_no=2_2007_03_11_55080>

    Other Arab writers have presented the Indian model of democracy as the only solution for the current Iraqi crisis. See, Hadi Hassan Elewi , *Al Sabah* newspaper (Baghdad), 17 March, 2007. <http://www.alsabaah.com/paper.php?source=akbar&mlf=interpage&sid=22483>

14. Jagdish P. Sharma , "Indo-Egyptian Relations: The Kashmir Factor," in Riyaz Punjabi and AK Pasha, ed., *India and the Islamic World* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers,1998), p. 108

15. Habiballah Khan, "Alhend wal henod fe Al adab Al Arabi [Indian and Indians in Arab Literature]" in *Thaqafat-ul-Hind,* vol. 49, no.1, 1998, Pp.96-106; S. Ahmed Al Siddiqi, "Al Asateer wa al athar Al Hindyia fe Al sher Al Arabi Al hadith [Myths and Indian Monuments in Modern Arab Poems]," in *Thaqafat-ul-Hind,* vol. 49, no.1,1998, Pp.107-117; and Kafil Ahmed Qasimi, "Al Hind Wa Al Hinod fe Nazaar Al Masodi [India

and Indians on the Eyes of Masodi]" in *Thaqafat-ul-Hind,* vol.52, no.2, 2001, Pp. 16-27

16. The novel was first published in 1897. It has a political dimension where history is used to reflect Ahmed Shawki's political views about the British occupation of Egypt, which was a blow for Egyptian pride. The story speaks of Ramses II who led his armada to conquer India. His son Achim helped him in leading the campaign. Dahnsh "the virgin of India" is the daughter of India's king of kings. She is the key character of the story with Achim, who falls in love with her. This love became a tragedy as Achim died in some unknown way and Dahnsh throws herself in the river and drowns. See, *Al Hayat* (London), 24 January 2006

17. Mohamed Aslam Islahi, "Al Hind wa A'lam al Hind Fe 'aion Sho'raa Mesr Al Goded [India and its Figures in the Eyes of Modern Egyptian Poets}" in *Thaqafat-ul-Hind,*vol.45, no.1, 1994, Pp.195-216

18. See, n. 5

19. See, n. 5

20. I owe the argument to my friend and scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Ginu Zacharia who is carrying out research on the idea of nationalism and minority politics. Interestingly, Fawaz Traboulsi , a Lebanese historian , makes a similar proposition when he argued that minorities' politics is not a new phenomena in West Asia. It is an imperial invention that has been played in the region since late nineteenth century. Fawaz Traboulsi, *War and Imperialism in Lebanon, View from the Resistance Movement* (unpublished document), (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union), 17 March 2007

21. See, n. 5

22. *Al-Ahram Weekly,* 9-15 May 2002

23. *Al-Ahram Weekly,* 7-13 March 2002

24. Ibid.

25. *Arab News* (Jeddah), 5 March 2002, gave a detailed account of the developments of communal riots in Gujarat on regular basis. Some of its reports were quoted by other Arabic-language magazines, such as *Al Mujtamaa* (Riyadh) which published a lengthy report on the problem in the issue of 5 July 2002. The magazine compared what happened in Gujarat with the Spanish model of eliminating Muslims from Spain in Medieval times.

26. "*Asia Times*, 26 April 2002

27. Ouda also called on Egyptian opposition to cooperate with Congress party and suggested sending a delegate from Egyptian opposition parties to congratulate the Congress for its victory in the election. See, *Al Arabi* (Cairo), 30 May 2005

28. Sir John Thomson, "Policy Paths in South Asia: Intersections between Global and Local" in Michael R. Chambers, ed., *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2002), p. 17, cited in Stephen J. Blank, *Natural Allies? Regional Security in Asia* (,Strategic Studies Institute—SSI—monographs; Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College , September 2005)

29. El Sayed Mekkawi, "Misr Wa Kashmir: Dirasa Tarikhyia Fe Diplomaciat Al Azamat (1950-51),[Egypt and Kashmir: A Historical Study in the Diplomacy of Crises (1950-1951)]," in the *Proceedings of the 5th Annual International Conference of the Management of Crises and Catastrophes*, vol.4,(Cairo: Ain Shames University, 2000), Pp. 193-225

30. Jagdish P Sharma, n. 14, p.104

31. AK Pasha, *India and West Asia: Continuity and Change*, (Delhi: Gyan Sagar, 1999), p.115. See also, Kalim Bahadur, "Pakistan as a Factor in India-OIC Relations;" and, S.K. Singh , "India, Pakistan and the OIC: Some Personal Reflections," in Riyaz Punjabi and AK Pasha, ed., n. 14, Pp.19-26; 27-33

32. Faiz Abu-Jaber, "The Development of Indo-Egyptian Relations," *Indian Political Science Review*, vol. 4, no. 2, April-September 1970, Pp.157-70

33. Quoted in Richard J. Kozicki, "India and the Arab World after Indira Gandhi: Continuity in Foreign policy," *American Arab Affairs*, no. 14, fall 1985, Pp.1-17

34. See, n. 28

35. G.Parthasarthy, ed., *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. I, 1947-49, (New Delhi: J. Nehru Memorial Fund , Oxford University Press , 1987) , p.165 , quoted in Najma Heptullah, n.10, p.161

36. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, (New Delhi: J. Nehru Memorial Fund, Oxford University Press, 1987), p.509, quoted in Najma Heptullah, n. 10, Pp.161-162

37. *Dawn* (Karachi),1December 1956, quoted in Jagdish P Sharma, 14, p.107

38. Arabic news item appeared on this link <http://www.arabiyat.com/forums/showthread.php?t=67877> and it was based on an exclusive interview to Vikram Sura for the *Hindu* (New Delhi). The relevant parts of the interview for our discussion are here:

"**Vikram:** Prime Minister Sharon is to make a `historic' visit to India in September. On the agenda is the `war on terror'. Israel is expected to assist India in border control practices, some of which are followed at the borders of Gaza, West Bank and also with Lebanon. How do you feel about this?

Arafat: This is silly talk. Because he can't offer anything for this programme. Don't forget you are speaking to Arafat; the Simla agreement, they say, is an Arafat agreement. You forget this, what I have done between two friendly, brotherly countries? And I am ready to play a role again if there is a misunderstanding. But what he [Mr. Sharon] is saying is to escalate the situation and war between Pakistan and India.

Vikram: Do you welcome this relationship between Israel and India?

Arafat: Look, when we signed the agreement with my partner Rabin, the doors were opened to my partner Rabin from China to Indonesia and to Senegal and in between, you remember?

More than 64 countries opened their doors to him. What is the meaning of 'the peace of the brave,' which we have signed with my partner Rabin? But we hope that this visit will be a pressure for him [Mr. Sharon] to make real peace with your brothers, the Palestinians." See, *Hindu*, 3 August 2003 < http://www.hinduonnet.com/2003/08/03/stories/2003080300231400.htm >

39. <http://arab.moheet.com/asp/show_f2.asp?do=1107567>

40. *Asharq Alarabi* (London), 9 September 2003; http://www.asharqalarabi.org.uk/paper/s-ruiah-zi1.htm

41. <http://www.arabgate.com >

42. Mohamed Noaman Galal, "Indo-Arab Relations from Rapprochement to Neutrality," Special Files , *Al Ma'refa,* 17 May 2006. Al Jazeera TV website, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/46D0825F-F848-4DB0-9AE0-CCDF450255EE.htm>

43. *Raya* (Qatar), 16 September 2003

44. General Talat Mesalm , "Indo-Israeli Relations and its Dangers," *Al Ma'refa,* 17 May 2006. Al Jazeera TV website , <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/8C98DE8E-2722-44F2-B9A6-37BBC69B7D8D.htm>

45. Medhat Ayub, "The Future of Indo-Israeli Alliance," Special Files, *Al Ma'refa,* 17 May 2006. Al Jazeera TV website , < http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/0FBE1967-2160-4465-946C-47D920D64AEB.htm>

46. See n. 5. Some Indians submit to the same view. During the meeting of the Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh with the Arab delegate at the 'International Conference of Indo-Arab Relations - Partnership and Development' on 13 November 2006, I told him that Arab people are looking for an active role for India to end the sufferings of Palestinian people .PM asserted that India support the Palestinian rights. I replied that Indian support for Palestinian struggle is welcomed by Arabs but still the Arab people are looking for active pro-Palestinian role that will stop the suffering of

Palestinians. PM commented that "the suffering of Palestinians is a shame on humanity", Prime Minister Office website, Photogallery, 13/11/2006, <http://pmindia.nic.in/ photogallery.htm>

47. Medhat Ayub, n. 45

48. India was counted responsible for three masscres and crimes out of 22 in the whole world and the same information were shared among many websites, see for example, Mahdi Qadi, "Read and Cry Blood for the Massacres of our Umma at the Modern Times (a survey for the massacres during the last century) < http://saaid.net/Minute/m7.htm>

49. The argument over Indian and Pakistani position was controversial for decades where some Arabs might agree with India or Pakistan but as a result of the long ongoing conflict and suffering of the Kashmiri people, sections of the Arab elite and informed people seems to be favourable to the idea of an independent Kashmir. See, n. 5

50. *Al Goumhouryia*, 14 March 1957

51. See, Aftab Khaled , *Indo-Kuwait Relations since 1961*, unpublished M. Phil dissertation, (New Delhi: School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1999); and ,Rashida M. Sofia, *Indo- Kuwait Relations: The Post-War II Phase*, unpublished M. Phil dissertation, (New Delhi: School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2000)

52. See, n. 5

53. Ayub Syed, *India and the Arab World* (New Delhi: Orient Publishers, 1965), p.25

54. Statement by Official Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi on the commencement of military action in Iraq, 20 March 2003 < http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/ 2003/03/20spc01.htm>

55. Statement by Official Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi on the situation in Lebanon, 30 July 2006 <http://meaindia.nic.in/searchhome.htm> path: search Lebanon in Press Releases

56. Associated Press, CIA analysing new 'al-Qaida' tape, Guardian Unlimited, 29 September 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/alqaida/story/0,,1052028,00.html>; On a tape broadcasted by Al Jazeera, Al Zawahri called for toppling the Pakistani President, 28 September 2003, Al Jazeera TV website, <http://www.aljazeera.net/News/archive/archive?ArchiveId=61115 >

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